COMIX WORLD 179. September 1, 1981. © Clay Geerdes, Box 7081, Berkeley, CA 94707. All Rights Reserved. Latest mini-comic is INSEX FUNNIES. Insect art by David Miller, Tom Brinkman, Jim Ryan, and me. 50¢/stamp.* Joe Zabel has a new one out, STORYBOOK COMICS. 32pp, B/W. It's $2 from Joe, 185 Maple Drive, Youngstown, OH 44512.* EL VIBORA 19 reprints work by Gilbert Shelton and Robert Williams. From Barcelona, VIBORA carries on the tradition of METAL HURLANT and L'ECHO DES SAVANES. Great covers and weird stories. HEAVY METAL has become a pale shadow of its EUROPEAN predecessor.* You're only free if you publish your own. Remember that. Newsletters are still a source of raw data, unedited, chaotic, random, often full of a mix of good stuff and bullshit, but always immediate and stimulating. I get them from people from time to time and I'm always glad they're out there doing it. I go on from year to year, because my own has put me in touch with a lot of good people. This week I got a copy of INSIDE JOKE from Elayne Wechsler (who wants to trade one of hers for one of yours so you newavers drop her one of your minis or whatever and see what INSIDE JOKE is all about) who stimulated me to write a little about 1968 on Haight Street. I flashback sometimes. See pin eyed teenagers floating in the back room of the Psychedelic shop tripping on the covers of THE EAST VILLAGE OTHER and CHICAGO SEED, thinking there are no papers like that anymore with everything so fucking serious these days. I hear that punk is dead, but see more punks around than ever before (indeed, the local media has just discovered punk and Berkeley had it's first outdoor punk festival this July). Hear slam-dancing is the fad on the vomit scene and ugly is hip.

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Most of the punks are the offspring of longhaired hip hottubbing parents so they chop and dye and stay dry, though quite a few dig Travis (deNiro from TAXI DRIVER) so they get Mohawk cuts and walk around looking razorblade mean and sulky. Namecalling is in and FUCK YOU is in vogue (remember Ed Sanders' mag FUCK YOU: A MAGAZINE OF THE ARTS? In case you're new to it all, Ed was one of the Village FUGS, a wasted jug band that preceded all of what is currently thought to be fresh punk theater. The FUGS once dumped spaghetti all over themselves during a performance at La Mama. Remember Allen Ginsberg chanting a dispersal Mantra outside the Peace Eye Bookstore, stilling a potential brawl without a single flying fist? You notice all the radio stations and even mainline t-v doing these nostalgia rock shows--that's because they can't figure out how to handle punk. There is, at last, something too gross for t-v.--okay, you want to hear about the convention, some comic rap, right, the state of the low arts. Bob Williams said it was lowbrow art and there would always be some new lowbrows on the scene to carry on with the comix. DON'T TRUST ANYONE OVER THIRTY! Well, gee, folks, everyone on the underground panel was over thirty and some over 40 (and some faking it). And can you tell where people are at by what they put in their panels? No. Well, I guess you can tell where Dave Berg is. Dave talked about the roots of humor. Pain. He said he has moved to California now, given up those lovely New York winters. Told us about the Brooklyn Renaissance--that himself, Barbra Streisand, Mel Brooks, and umpteen others have come out of Brooklyn to make it on the world scene in the past decade. Why is that? No one knew. Maybe Brooklyn is just a big place. Didn't they all move out after they made it? Berg was fun. He kept getting affirmation for his witticisms from Sergio Aragones who was in the audience spying for Bill Gaines. Those MAD guys keep track of each other. Berg said MAD mag has turned out more scoutmasters than any other humor mag--Hmmm, did he actually survey them all? No scoutmasters at CRACKED or CRAZY? To liven up the banquet while thirty or forty inkpot Awards were given out by Shel Dorf, Sergio did caricatures of all the guests. No serious moments there, though Shel tried. Everyone was laughing at Sergio, the World's fastest cartoonist, particularly when he did both of Shel's chins. Dirty pool? Naaa. Shel's a good sport (or was he?). Banquets are hard on most people. You're sitting at a table with a group of strangers and you may or may not know who's who. That makes conversation a little sticky. I always wade right in and talk to whoever is around. Clown a little. Try to warm things up. The egos are so bloated at cons, it isn't easy. Lots of levels going on simultaneously. For the artists, it's work, after all; they're there to hype their product, to smooth in with the right people, to score new contacts, new work, and if they should accidently have a good time with the wrong person, well, things could get bad back on Madison Avenue. Everything is happening at once. People are trying to score dope and sex and work. People are lying like hell and there are others around hearing and smirking at their lies. Top industry artworkers are wallowing in egoboo, lapping up all that slavish praise for their Kirby swipes and traced photographs, grinning and playing it to the hilt, hoping no one remembers where they ripped off the idea for that last story, what old E-C or F & SF story has just been rewritten for the millionth time to be praised as "creative and brilliant work". But everyone in the biz knows all this and doesn't give a shit. Some people just lay the truth on you since it makes no difference. "Christ, man, do you realize I'm forty fucking years old and I'm still inking Fartsniff and Vapid for Eastern?? I still haven't gotten my own character." "Well, when I started there, I tried to do something, but all those cocksuckers want are traced photographs, so, fuck it, I just turn on the lightboard and put in my eight." In the dealer's room, the big beating heart of any con, you find the same people sitting behind the same inflated old comic books, hoping some chump will come along and drop a couple hundred for an old PHANTOM LADY or some other (chuckle) "good girl art" comic hacked out in the forties. And sometimes you see the artists looking at copies of their own books that they can't afford to buy. Someone who never drew a fucking line is making hundreds of bucks off books they got for a few bucks years ago. Ah, comic book dealing is a corrupt business. The sharpies profit from the ignorance of others. The artists hate their guts. I hear it a lot. Oh, they have to be nice to the dealers, because there is money to be made, rent to pay, groceries to buy, a style to maintain, but underneath it lies a level of anger, disgust, and hostility, usually displaced to lovers and spouses. The industry artists are the most deceived. They're in a situation where they have to promote the very people who are getting rich off their labor and they don't even see themselves as workers. They think they're stars. You have to go to a con to see it all as it really is. Little kids come up to you and say, "Are you anyone?" And you realize you could tell them anything and it wouldn't make any difference. It's just a game they're playing for awhile. The comic stores are teaching it. See, kid, you collect this superhero and when your collection is complete you start on this one and one day you'll have them all and they'll be worth big money and.. Alas, the Trekkies are now into elves' ears. All hail Richard and Wendy Pini.

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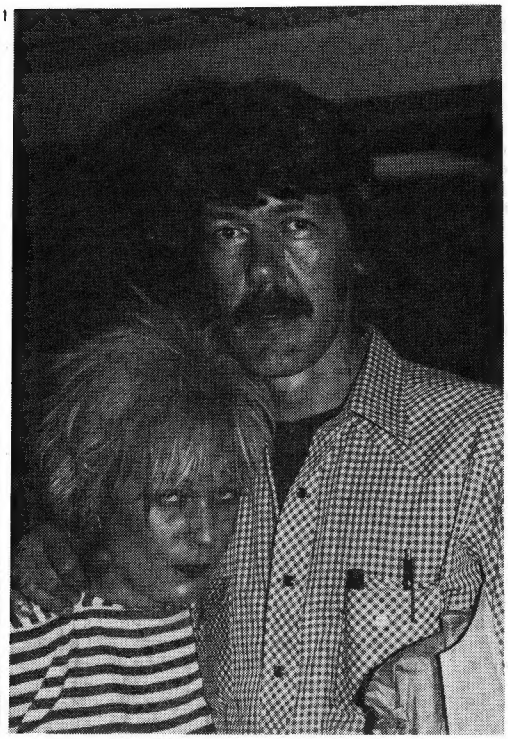

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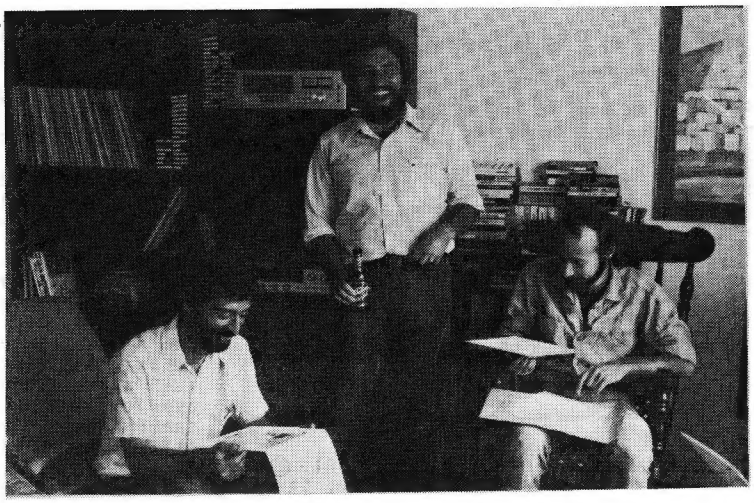

That's JIM OSBORNE and his friend to your left. Jim, strongly influenced by the work of Lynn Ward and the writings of H. P. Lovecraft and the E-C Comics, quit doing underground comix some years ago when he found there was no living there. He still lives in the Bay Area where he does advertising and poster work. The woman is lead singer of rock group, VKTMS. Above, newave artists David Miller, Par Holman, and Mike Turville are looking over each other's artwork at Clay and Clara's place. Holman was in the Bay Area for a few days in July. He lives in Utah.

That's Dave Berg in the cap, Sergio Aragones in the moustache. Both are MAD artists. Sergio recently did a map of the United States that you ought to have on your wall. Below Bill "Katy Keene" Woggan and Shelby get together for a brief chat at the San Diego Con. Bill's in fine health and having a good time. Lots of Katy fan clubs around. He is retired and lives in Santa Barbara. Shelby is not retired and still lives in the Bay Area where she works as a graphic artist and designer. You've seen work by Shelby in WIMMEN's COMIX and TITS 'N' CLITS. The women's comics trip seems to have faded into history and there was no women's panel at either Creation Con or San Diego this year.* The single underground character in this year's costume contest was Zippy (Scott Shaw in a nice clown costume). He was part of the All Human Orchestra of Raoul Duke and one of the high points of the evening was Zip handing a ding dong to Forrest Ackerman. The costumes were outstanding, but everyone was overwhelmed by the Star

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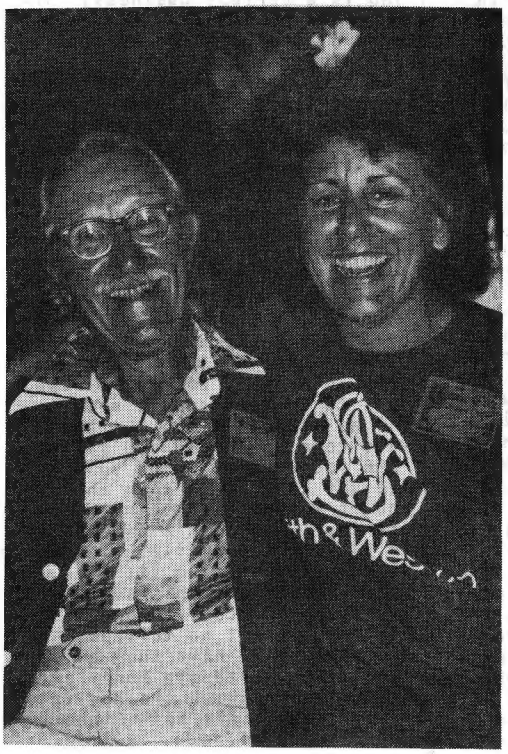

entry which included all of the characters from Wendy and Richard Pini's ELFQUEST. The elf epic is in its tenth book and doing very well. I'm told Comics and Comix intends to bring the Pinis to the Bay Area for a promo gig this Fall. That's Richard below in the t-shirt, Wendy with the sword. You saw her last in COMIX WORLD in her Red Sonja costume.* Support us on the club magazine, people. I have the first three issues printed. You get all three for $4 pp.

All Photography by Clay Geerdes, ©1981.

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